

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13

SSM-05 ACDA-10 /095 W

-----290642Z 090636 /15

R 281533Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1506

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0630

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJECT: AL-BAATH COLUMNIST EXPRESSES SKEPTICISM OVER  
SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING VISIT

1. ON JAN 27 AL-BAATH COLUMNIST EXPRESSED DEEP SKEPTICISM TOWARD SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO ME. NOTING IT WAS HIS FIRST TRIP ABROAD, COLUMNIST OPINED NEW ADMINISTRATION WANTED TO GIVE ARABS IMPRESSION THAT ME PEACE SETTLEMENT ENJOYED "ABSOLUTE PRIORITY" IN US FOREIGN POLICY. HE DECLARED, "THIS IS THE MESSAGE OF THE VANCE VISIT--PERHAPS THE ONLY MESSAGE SINCE IT UNDERSTOOD THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE MERELY INTENDS TO EXPLORE VIEWS." HE PROTESTED THIS ANOTHER IN SERIES OF FACT-FINDING VISITS ORIGINALLY INITIATED BY GOV. SCRANTON: "FACT-FINDING CONTINUES BUT THINGS REMAIN AS THEY WERE."

2. COLUMNIST PREDICTED THAT WHEN SECRETARY VISITS AREA HE WILL REPEAT ALL STOCK PHRASES HEARD PREVIOUSLY FROM OTHER  
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VISITING US OFFICIALS, "NAMELY, THAT US IS EARNEST IN ITS SEARCH FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN PARTIES TO CONFLICT, CONCERNED FOR SECURITY OF ISRAEL, AND OBLIGED TO PROVIDE HER WITH LARGE QUANTITIES OF SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE ISRAEL REASSURED OF ITS GOODWILL. US CANNOT PRESSURE ISRAEL SINCE THIS BOUND TO RESTRICT US ABILITY TO EMPLOY ITS GOOD OFFICES. MOREOVER, US HAS ONLY LIMITED POWER AND CANNOT EXERT PRESSURE

ON SOVEREIGN STATE."

3. SPEAKING IRONICALLY, HE SPECULATED THAT NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD TAKE ATTITUDE IT NOT BOUND BY POLICIES OF PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION AND MIGHT SUGGEST NEW MEANS TO BRING PARTIES TOGETHER. IF IT NOT POSSIBLE BRING ALL PARTIES TOGETHER "DUE TO INTERNAL CONDITIONS IN ISRAEL," US WOULD STILL DECLARE IT POSSIBLE TO TAKE "A STEP FORWARD--PUTTING THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT." EDITORIAL THEN CONCLUDED BY SUGGESTING US, IF IT UNABLE TO CONVENE GENEVA CONFERENCE, WOULD TELL ARABS IT HAS REASON TO BELIEVE ISRAEL MIGHT BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS A BILATERAL AGREEMENT. HE ASSERTED SARCASTICALLY, "THIS IN ITSELF IMPLIES SUFFICIENT PROGRESS TO PREVENT SETTLEMENT PROCESS FROM COMING TO STANDSTILL. IT MIGHT EVEN GIVE IT IMPETUS AND VITALITY."

MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, PRESS COMMENTS, MINISTERIAL VISITS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 28-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
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**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3679487  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AL-BAATH COLUMNIST EXPRESSES SKEPTICISM OVER SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING VISIT  
**TAGS:** PFOR, OVIP, SY, US, XF, (VANCE, CYRUS R)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009